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give, in the minimum of time spent on the subject, a general statement of the law on a particular point, and a complete citation of cases, cannot do better than place upon his shelf a copy of Mr. BEACH's latest work.

In looking over all Mr. BEACH's books we find he has always had a very clear idea of what he wants to give the profession, but, without disparaging his previous attempts, in none of his works which we have read has he so completely accomplished what he has attempted to do as in this on "Modern Equity Jurisprudence."

W. D. L.

COMMENTARIES ON THE LAW OF PUBLIC CORPORATIONS, INCLUDING MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS AND POLITICAL OR GOVERNMENTAL CORPORATIONS OF EVERY CLASS. By CHARLES FISK BEACH, JR. In two volumes. Indianapolis: The Bowen-Merrill Company, 1893.

It is seldom that one receives from the same author, within one month after having reviewed a work of over 1578 pages, another work covering 1984 pages. The treatise on "Equity" called forth an expression of our admiration for the author's energy—the receipt of this book has increased that admiration. Mr. BEACH tells us in his preface that he has "attempted to consider all the law of public corporations, including municipal corporations, and governmental or political corporations of every class." Taken in connection with his work on "Private Corporations" (Chicago, 1891), they constitute a complete treatise, in four uniform volumes, on company law in all its phases, from the federal government at the one extreme to the most insignificant joint-stock association or local corporation at the other.

A public corporation, in Mr. BEACH's view, is co-extensive with government. His book may, therefore, be said to be a work on government, both national, state, and local, in which the national and State governments are only incidentally referred to, while the real substance of the book is a work on local governments—whether that local government derives its powers by prescription, is a creation of the Constitution, or, as is most frequently the case in the United States, is the creation of a charter enacted by a State legislature. Though the introductory chapters contain a very good historical review of the rise of the modern English and American municipal corporations, the work is in no sense a critical, historical, or comparative study of local government in the United States or in England. Neither is it a study of the actual or possible construction of the local government itself, but it is primarily a study for the lawyer of the present legal method of creation—powers, liabilities, and dissolution of local governments in the United States as determined by the decisions of our State and federal courts. As such, it is a work of great value. It is a mine of information, if not of critical discussion, on the powers and liabilities of public corporations. The book is eminently a book of reference, rather than a book to be read. The desire to render each chapter a complete treatise on the subject treated has necessitated considerable repetition. As, for instance, on page 233, § 221, the author treats of "Municipal bonds void when *ultra vires*;" while on page 629, § 614, the

same subject is treated from only a slightly different point of view. On page 593, § 578, under the head of "Fire Limits," we read that, "A provision in a charter to prevent the reconstruction in wood of old buildings within certain limits does not include the power to prevent the repairing with shingles the roof of buildings originally covered with similar materials;" while on page 614, § 598, we find the same case cited, and the same principle stated almost exactly in the same words. From the standpoint of those who desire to read this treatise, these repetitions, which occur quite frequently, would be very annoying; but from the standpoint of one who looks at the work as a book of reference, this method of completely treating each subject, regardless of any slight repetition in another part of the text, is a great advantage, and is, we believe, largely the secret of the success of Mr. BEACH's works. When we use ordinary text-books as books of reference we are almost always obliged to read the work half through before any particular subdivision of the subject can be completely mastered. To take an example: Those who turn to Mr. BEACH's work and wish to find out anything about *ultra vires* acts of a public corporation can do so by turning to his chapter on that subject, while those who desire to know the liability of a municipal corporation for the *ultra vires* acts of its agents will find the subject treated in full under the chapter on "Officers and Agents." In other words, it is not necessary to go first to one chapter and then to another to find out all that it is necessary for a lawyer to know on officers and agents of public corporations, or on *ultra vires*. For in each chapter the author seems to have regarded the subject of public corporations from a different point of view, and completely treated the subject from that standpoint, thus creating one of the most complete reference text-books we have ever seen.

W. D. L.

A TREATISE ON THE ADMISSIBILITY OF PAROL EVIDENCE IN RESPECT TO WRITTEN INSTRUMENTS. By IRVING BROWNE. New York: L. K. Strouse & Co., 1893.

This work is, as the author tells us in his preface, the outcome of a lengthy course of reading and study. The author has brought together a large amount of valuable material, and the book would be useful if it were only for the large and complete collection of cases bearing upon the matters discussed.

In his introductory chapter Mr. BROWNE states the "general rule excluding parol evidence," gives "reasons for exceptions to the rule," and among other matters reprints so much of STEPHEN'S Digest of the Law of Evidence as bears upon the parol evidence rule, the provisions of the New York proposed Code of Evidence on the same subject, together with the rules stated by Mr. AUSTIN ABBOTT and Mr. CHARLES CHAMBERLAYNE. In subsequent chapters are discussed "Primary Rules," "Parties," "Strangers," "Consideration," "Formation and Delivery," "Legal-ity of Agreements," "Fraud," "Mistake," "Modification, Discharge, Substitution and Waiver," "Patent Ambiguities," "Incomplete Agreements," "Mercantile Contracts," "Usage," "Negotiable Instruments," "Deeds," "Receipts, Bills of Lading, Releases," "Subscriptions," "Bonds," "Judgments," and "Wills."